Educational Highlights: My journey in the Religious Studies department has allowed me to develop a keen understanding of and sensitivity to the balance and relationship between religions and the environment, historically, cross-culturally, and in the present. My background in Geology and Environmental Studies has made me aware of changing ecological conditions, and pursuing that interest through the lenses of Religious Studies has been both fascinating and rewarding.

Research Focus or Project: My focus is, broadly speaking, in Ecology and Religion. This field seeks to answer a number of important questions, such as how religions are shaped by the environment, how religions motivate actions that affect the environment (both positively and negatively), and how religions today are responding to current ecological degradation. I have had the privilege to present a paper on these issues at a regional religion conference in Atlanta in 2014. Specifically combining my Religious Studies and Geology backgrounds, I performed a discourse analysis of climate change denial as an Independent Study entitled “He Who Denied It Supplied It: Investigating the Motivations and Sources of Climate Science Denial.” My final summer, I received a SURF grant to travel to research Transition Towns in Totnes, England, where I engaged in ethnography, interviews, and eventually produced a manuscript under review for publication. That paper has also been accepted for the 2015 American Academy for Religion (AAR) meeting in Atlanta.

Future Plans: In the fall of 2015 I will begin a PhD program at the University of Colorado at Boulder in Geology, where I will study the relationship between geological conditions and biological activity and responses. I plan to present my research from England at the 2015 AAR annual meeting, and thereafter remain engaged in the study of religious responses to changing geological conditions (climate change, water loss, etc.). Although my career goals lie in Geology, my life passions remain in how geology is shaped by, and shapes us, as individuals and as a culture. In the uncertainty that looms over the Earth’s ecological future, all lenses, together, can perhaps provide a solution.